

and enters somewhat beyond the palatal callus; but it differs by the distinctly bifid parietal tooth. The very strong crest behind the lip is characteristic of *B. agna*. Like the related forms, this species has the somewhat translucent whiteness of spermaceti or paraffin.

In the specimen from Kansas the teeth are somewhat smaller than in the type. It may be less mature.

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#### CORRESPONDENCE.

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*Editor Nautilus*: I have to thank Mr. Burnett Smith for his extended review of my paper on American *Volutidæ* in the March NAUTILUS. There are, however, a few points on which further light is desirable, and I wish to note them briefly.

1. So far from this being the general revision of the family upon which I have been for some time at work the recent publication is only a small part of it, which I thought I had made clear in my remarks on page 341. My regret at not being able to illustrate the paper is quite as great as that of my reviewer, but only those cognizant of the facts know, since we lost Dr. McConnell, how many fruitless, or almost fruitless, efforts have been made to obtain a competent draughtsman. An important paper has been for more than a year at a complete standstill, owing to the absence of an artist who could do the drawings.

2. I pointed out in 1890 the identity of the so-called *Athleta tuomeyi* with *Volutilithes petrosa* Conrad, and ascribed the deformity to some special conditions of the environment. We have some two thousand specimens in the National Museum, a part of which are normal. But while the most conspicuously deformed specimens are from Wood's Bluff and the lower Eocene generally, we have also distorted forms from Jackson, Miss., and several other Jacksonian localities, and one specimen from the Claibornes ands. These I shall be happy to show Mr. Smith if he can pay us a visit.

That the true *Athleta rarispina* bears any such relation to *Voluta spinosa* Lam. as *V. tuomeyi* does to *petrosa* is impossible, for Mr. Smith's suggestion is incompatible with the fact that *A. rarispina* is confined to the upper Oligocene, Miocene and Pliocene of Europe, while *V. spinosa* is restricted to middle Eocene (Calcaire Grossiere). There is no species contemporaneous with the *Athleta* which could take the place of *V. spinosa* in such a relation, and, further, the two species of *Athleta* are normal and not abnormal shells.

3. The remarks about *Plejona* which were made by both Mr. R. B. Newton and Mr. Smith indicate unfamiliarity with nomenclatorial questions, which indeed are sometimes sufficiently puzzling. But there is no ambiguity or difficulty in the case of *Plejona*, if the rules are complied with. Bolten's genus (for the period remarkably homogeneous) contains 24 species, all of which are identifiable, in terms of the older authors, and only one of which is a fossil. The first (fossil) species is based upon four very fair figures of "spiny murices," which Argenville referred to one species, but which represent three or four, as species are now reckoned. If we prefer to take our type from the first species in Bolten's list, it reduces itself to a simple process of elimination which leaves us with *V. spinosa* (one of those figured) as the type. If we regard the solution as vague, there still remains my absolute right to revive Bolten's name for any species contained in his list, and for which there is no prior valid name. This I did several months before Mr. Newton proposed *Volutoospina* for the same shell.

If we reject Bolten's *P. fossilis* as vague, we are left to take *Voluta ebraea*, his second species, as type, which involves the loss of the generic name *Voluta* (Lam.), as now universally used, which it seems to me would be foolish, since the preceding method enables us to retain *Voluta* for *V. musica* and its allies without upsetting any accepted name.

I regard *Athleta (rarispina)* Conrad as a good genus, perfectly distinct from *Plejona (spinosa)* Bolten, as well as from the *V. petrosa* deformities. The latter were erroneously referred to the genus *Athleta*, which they really only superficially resemble, and consequently any attempt to use *Athleta* for the *spinosa* group is fallacious. *Athleta* does not occur in America, but there are probably three European species.

WM. H. DALL.

*Smithsonian Institution, March 6, 1907.*

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#### PUBLICATIONS RECEIVED.

WEST AMERICAN MITRIDÆ.—By Mrs. M. Burton Williamson (Proc. Biol. Soc., Washington, xix, Dec., 1906). *Mitra idæ, fultoni, lowi*, and the Peruvian *M. orientalis* are discussed at length and with the exception of *M. lowi*, figured. A useful work, since these black Mitres have been involved in some confusion.